

# LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

## Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **July 9, 2002, Work Session**

Agenda Item No.: **5**

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

(Confidential)

ACTION:

INFORMATION: **X**

ITEM TITLE: **The Aviary – Miller Park**

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss and offer input for the formation of a new agreement for the management of The Aviary, located in Miller Park.

SUMMARY:

Since 1975, the Lynchburg Council of Garden Clubs (LCGC) has played a prominent role in the day to day management and maintenance of The Aviary. The Council of Garden Clubs approached Parks and Recreation requesting consideration of forming a new partnership to better delineate responsibilities to ensure sustained management of the building. City staff has worked with LCGC over a period of months to define roles and create an advisory board to provide oversight for operations, building maintenance and improvements. Staff will brief Council on the proposed new arrangement during the work session.

PRIOR ACTION(S): None

BUDGET IMPACT: Undetermined

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ATTACHMENT(S): Executive Summary, July 1, 2002

REVIEWED BY:

**Executive Summary**  
**The Aviary**  
**July 9, 2002**

The Aviary, built in 1901-02, was a gift from Randolph Guggenheimer of New York. Over the course of years, The Aviary was home to a zoo, library and recreation center. Since 1975, The Lynchburg Council of Garden Clubs (LCGC) has managed The Aviary through a lease agreement with the City. For the sum of one dollar a year, LCGC leased The Aviary from the City for the purposes of utilizing the building for a garden and horticulture center with rights to lease the building to others. The LCGC assumed responsibility for maintenance and utilities for the operation of the building. Over the years, LCGC also contributed to making both minor and major building repairs. The Council was instrumental in placing The Aviary on the Historical Register.

The Lynchburg Council of Garden Clubs has become increasingly concerned with their ability to provide sustained management of The Aviary. The day to day management of the building includes rentals to the public, janitorial services, maintenance, fund raising and providing oversight for building repairs. For many months, LCGC and City staff have discussed how best to work in partnership to provide long term management for this important City landmark. Our goal was to provide LCGC with the opportunity to continue to play a vital role in the future of The Aviary and return to their mission of promoting horticulture educational programs. A secondary goal was to place operations and maintenance responsibilities with City staff.

Through discussion LCGC and City staff have taken the following steps in forming a partnership to reach those goals:

- An Advisory Board was formed, comprised of four members from LCGC and four City staff. The Advisory Board serves to coordinate interests of all parties in the management, planning, improvements and advocacy for The Aviary. The Advisory Board develops short and long term recommendations for building improvements, advises on operating and capital budgets and advises on fund raising and revenue generating activities.
- The Division of Parks and Recreation assumed responsibility for the day to day management of the building that includes rentals, janitorial services and coordination of maintenance requests. Parks and Recreation will include consideration of The Aviary in planning for Miller Park, provide administrative support for the Advisory Board and develop business and marketing plans for the building.
- The Council of Garden Clubs serves as an advocacy group for The Aviary, with responsibility for fund raising and assisting with developing policies and plans for the building. The Council will continue to utilize the Aviary for meetings, fund raising events and horticulture

educational programs. The Council will provide some oversight for building improvements with an emphasis placed on historic preservation.

- The Division of Buildings and Grounds provides day to day building and site maintenance, heavy cleaning services and oversight for utility and maintenance budgets. Most importantly, Buildings and Grounds will provide leadership for the Building Committee on the Advisory Board. The Building Committee will develop priorities and budgets for short and long term goals for building improvements.

City staff has taken steps to assume the above stated responsibilities:

- A budget request, in the amount of \$10,000, was made and approved for the City to assume responsibility for utility bills and heavy cleaning of the building.
- Building and Grounds completed a facility evaluation to identify any immediate and long term building improvement issues. Building and Grounds will begin in fiscal year '04 to incorporate building repair needs into the major building repair fund.
- Buildings and Grounds is providing leadership for the Building Committee to make fixture and wiring improvements in The Aviary. LCGC will fund these improvements.
- Parks and Recreation is taking a leading role in establishing the Advisory Board. In addition, the Division is developing policies for the building and working in coordination with members of LCGC to transition rental responsibilities to the City.

All parties concerned believe that forming a partnership provides sustained management to ensure that The Aviary is preserved and used to the greatest benefit to the Lynchburg Community. This new relationship does place greater responsibility on the City to assist with the funding of operating expenses and building repair costs, and developing policies to encourage appropriate public use of the building. The partnership also allows LCGC to devote their time and energies to their mission of providing educational programs and serving in an advocacy role for The Aviary.